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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 005090

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MILAN, FLORENCE, NAPLES ADDED)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2012

TAGS: PREL IT IR IT IR IT IR IZ IZPREL IZPREL IZPREL

SUBJECT: BERLUSCONI-PUTIN MEETING: ITALIAN READOUT

REF: ROME 5036 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION EMIL SKODON,  
REASON 1.5 (B & D )

SECRET

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (S) IRAQ WAS THE MAJOR SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AT A WORKING LUNCH IN MOSCOW BETWEEN ITALIAN PM BERLUSCONI AND RUSSIAN PRESIDENT PUTIN ON OCTOBER 16. THE TWO LEADERS AGREED ON THE NEED FOR A STRONG UNSC RESOLUTION THAT WOULD SEND INSPECTORS BACK TO IRAQ SOON WITH A STRONG MANDATE TO GO "ANYWHERE, ANYTIME." PUTIN, HOWEVER, SAID THERE WERE TWO RED LINES HE COULD NOT CROSS: AN AUTOMATIC TRIGGER FOR THE USE OF FORCE, AND UNILATERAL ACTION BY THE U.S. WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL SANCTION. PUTIN PRESSED HOME TO BERLUSCONI THE POINT THAT HIS PROBLEMS WITH CHECHNYA AND GEORGIA SHOULD BE EQUATED WITH PRESIDENT BUSH'S PROBLEMS WITH IRAQ, AND IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ACCEPTED U.S. ACTION AGAINST IRAQ IT SHOULD ALSO ACCEPT RUSSIAN ACTION AGAINST CHECHNYA "TERRORISTS." ON OTHER ISSUES, PUTIN CLAIMED THAT RUSSIAN AID TO IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM WAS SOLELY FOR NON-MILITARY PROGRAMS, AND TOLD BERLUSCONI HE WOULD NOT ATTEND THE NATO SUMMIT IN PRAGUE. END SUMMARY.

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BERLUSCONI TO MOSCOW  
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¶12. (C) ITALIAN PM BERLUSCONI MADE A ONE-DAY TRIP TO MOSCOW ON OCTOBER 16 FOR A WORKING LUNCH WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN, PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS IRAQ. UPON HIS RETURN TO ROME, THE PM RELATED HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH PUTIN TO AMBASSADOR SEMBLER DURING A SOCIAL EVENT BOTH ATTENDED THE

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EVENING OF OCTOBER 16. ON OCTOBER 17, DCM RECEIVED A FULL READOUT FROM THE PM'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, AMBASSADOR GIOVANNI CASTELLANETA, WHO ACCOMPANIED BERLUSCONI TO HIS MEETING WITH PUTIN.

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WMD  
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¶13. (C) THE NORMALLY RESERVED CASTELLANETA WAS CLEARLY PEEVED WITH THE ITALIAN PRESS, WHICH HE CLAIMED HAD COMPLETELY MISINTERPRETED THE PM'S COMMENTS ON IRAQI WMD FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH PUTIN. ACCORDING TO CASTELLANETA, PUTIN TOLD BERLUSCONI THAT SADDAM PROBABLY HAD ALREADY DESTROYED SOME OF HIS WMD STOCKS AND "DISPLACED" OTHERS SO THAT THEY WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR UN INSPECTORS TO LOCATE, A VIEW WITH WHICH THE PM AGREED. THE SENSE OF THE CONVERSATION HAD BEEN THAT THIS WAS REASON TO SEND IN INSPECTORS QUICKLY AND WITH A STRONG MANDATE, BEFORE EVEN MORE TIME WAS LOST AND SADDAM CONCEALED MORE OF HIS WMD.

¶14. (SBU) THE PM HAD MEANT TO CONVEY THIS POINT TO THE ITALIAN PRESS UPON HIS RETURN TO ROME, BY STATING THAT THERE WAS PROBABLY NO LONGER ANY WMD STOCKS AT THOSE SITES IN IRAQ WHERE THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN LOCATED. THE PRESS, UNFORTUNATELY, HAD REPORTED THAT BERLUSCONI NO LONGER BELIEVED IRAQ HAD ANY WMD, PERIOD. CASTELLANETA DESCRIBED THE MEDIA REPORTS AS A HUGE "MISUNDERSTANDING." (LATER ON OCTOBER 17, BERLUSCONI, SPEAKING TO THE PRESS IN LISBON WHERE HE WAS ATTENDING A MEETING OF EUROPEAN CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES, STATED "I NEVER SAID THERE WERE NO WEAPONS OF MASS

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DESTRUCTION ( I SAID MANY TIMES THAT IT WAS VERY LIKELY, ALMOST CERTAIN, THAT THERE WERE THESE WEAPONS. )

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UNSC ACTION  
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¶15. (S) CASTELLANETA SAID THE TWO LEADERS AGREED THAT ANY RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE REINTRODUCTION OF INSPECTORS HAD TO

BE A TOUGH ONE WHICH MADE CLEAR THAT INSPECTORS COULD GO "ANYWHERE, ANYTIME." PUTIN MADE CLEAR TO BERLUSCONI, HOWEVER, THAT RUSSIA HAD GONE AS FAR AS IT COULD GO TO MEET USG DESIRES FOR A STRONG UNSC RESOLUTION ON IRAQ. THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT IDENTIFIED TWO RED LINES THAT HE COULD NOT CROSS: A UNSC RESOLUTION THAT CONTAINED AN AUTOMATIC TRIGGER FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE IF IRAQ FAILED TO MEET ALL OF ITS OBLIGATIONS, AND ACCEPTANCE OF UNILATERAL RESORT TO FORCE BY THE U.S. WITHOUT "INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY" (I.E., UN SANCTION).

16. (S) ACCORDING TO CASTELLANETA, HIS PM TRIED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BY ARGUING THAT IF A STRONG RESOLUTION CALLING FOR EFFECTIVE INSPECTIONS INSIDE IRAQ WAS PASSED AND SADDAM PREVENTED SUCH INSPECTIONS FROM BEING CARRIED OUT, ANY SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY COULD BE CONSIDERED "WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL LEGALITY." IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH BERLUSCONI, AMBASSADOR SEMBLER ASKED THE PM DIRECTLY IF, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH PUTIN, HE NOW

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PTQ5680

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 COR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SRPP-00 VC-00 H-01  
TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 NEA-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00  
ACE-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00 TRSE-00 T-00  
USIE-00 PMB-00 DRL-02 G-00 SAS-00 /008W  
-----FA735C 182140Z /40

O 171625Z OCT 02  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6400  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL MILAN IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL FLORENCE IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL NAPLES IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 ROME 005090

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [IT](#) [IR](#) [IT](#) [IR](#) [IT](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [IZPREL](#) [IZPREL](#) [IZPREL](#)  
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THE PM DIRECTLY IF, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH PUTIN, HE NOW SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF TWO RESOLUTIONS; BERLUSCONI REPLIED "NO, I DO NOT."

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EQUATING IRAQ WITH CHECHNYA  
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17. (S) CASTELANETTA REPORTED THAT PUTIN ARGUED STRONGLY TO BERLUSCONI THAT HIS PROBLEMS WITH GEORGIA AND CHECHNYA WERE ISSUES OF TERRORISM, NOT POLITICS, AND HAD TO BE RECOGNIZED AS SUCH BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD BE A "DOUBLE STANDARD." BERLUSCONI COMMENTED THAT RUSSIA WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE PROOF OF TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN CHECHNYA, TO WHICH PUTIN REPLIED THAT HE ALREADY HAD PROOF: RUSSIAN SECURITY FORCES HAD CAPTURED NUMEROUS FOREIGN TERRORISTS AND EVEN RECOVERED THE DEAD BODY OF A BRITISH CITIZEN FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF THE "TERRORISTS." PUTIN STRESSED THAT IF THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES WERE GIVEN A GREEN LIGHT TO DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEM IN IRAQ, HE SHOULD HAVE SIMILAR ACQUIESCE FOR DEALING WITH HIS TERRORIST PROBLEM IN CHECHNYA AND GEORGIA.

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IRAN  
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18. (S) CASTELLANETA REPORTED THAT THE ITALIAN SIDE HAD RAISED IRAN AS REQUESTED BY THE USG (REFTEL), BUT BECAUSE THE DISCUSSION ON IRAQ HAD GONE ON FOR SO LONG THE IRAN PORTION OF THE CONVERSATION WAS ABBREVIATED. PUTIN MAINTAINED THAT

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RUSSIA WAS INVOLVED ONLY IN IRAN'S CIVILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND HAD NO INTENTION OF SUPPORTING A MILITARY NUCLEAR PROGRAM OR DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHAHAB III MISSILE; TO DO OTHERWISE

WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR RUSSIA AND CLEARLY NOT IN ITS INTEREST. CASTELLANETA VOLUNTEERED TO DCM THAT PUTIN APPEARED SINCERE IN HIS STATEMENT THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BACK THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRANIAN WMD OR TEHRAN'S MISSILE PROGRAM (ALTHOUGH CASTELLANETA ALSO COMMENTED THAT PUTIN MIGHT NOT BE FULLY AWARE OF SOME OF THE GRAY AND BLACK MARKET DEALS ORIGINATING IN RUSSIA).

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NATO SUMMIT  
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¶9. (S) ACCORDING TO CASTELLANETA, BERLUSCONI RECEIVED A FLATLY NEGATIVE REPLY WHEN HE ASKED PUTIN IF HE WOULD ATTEND THE NATO PRAGUE SUMMIT; THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT INTENDED TO SEND HIS FOREIGN MINISTER INSTEAD.

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PUTIN'S VIEW OF U.S.  
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¶10. (S) BERLUSCONI TOLD AMBASSADOR SEMBLER THAT HE HAD STRESSED TO PUTIN THAT PRESIDENT BUSH'S DETERMINATION TO DEAL WITH IRAQ REFLECTED THE DEEP FEELINGS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ABOUT FACING UP TO POTENTIAL THREATS IN THE WAKE OF SEPTEMBER ¶11. THE ITALIAN PM HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT PUTIN WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THIS ASSESSMENT, AND APPEARED NOT TO BE AWARE THAT PRESIDENT BUSH'S STAND ENJOYED WIDE PUBLIC BACKING

SECRET

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WITHIN THE U.S. CASTELLANETA TOLD DCM THAT PUTIN MADE CLEAR TO HIS ITALIAN GUESTS THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING DISAGREEMENTS OVER THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION VIS-A-VIS IRAQ, HE BELIEVED PRESIDENT BUSH TO BE A SINCERE LEADER WHO HE TRUSTED AND WITH WHOM HE ENJOYED WORKING. SEMBLER

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NEA-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/007W		

-----F99139 172304Z /40

O 171625Z OCT 02  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6399  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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PAGE 02 ROME 05090 01 OF 02 172304Z  
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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NEA-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/007W		

-----F9913F 172305Z /40

O 171625Z OCT 02  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6400  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EQUATING IRAQ WITH CHECHNYA  
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NATO SUMMIT  
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19. (S) ACCORDING TO CASTELLANETA, BERLUSCONI RECEIVED A  
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PUTIN'S VIEW OF U.S.  
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SEMBLER

SECRET

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